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## **Electronic Democracy as a Technological Platform for Government Electoral Process Management in Russia**

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**Abstract:**

*The aim of the article is to consider the aspects of introducing electronic democracy as a technological platform for government electoral process management in Russian Federation.*

*Throughout the process of this study, author concludes that under modern conditions it is necessary to develop electronic government and electronic democracy. Electronic technology ensures legitimacy of government power with the help of democratic institutions' development.*

*On the basis of the research, the author offers a mechanism to integrate people and public movement in order to achieve political targets, as well as to make the work of government management more transparent and open.*

**Keywords:** *Government management, electronic government, electronic executive, electronic democracy, subjects of government management, government management of electoral process.*

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## **1. Introduction**

Before considering electronic democracy as a technological platform for government electoral process management in the Russian Federation, it is necessary to refer to the term “electronic government”. Russian scientific literature currently contains two definitions: “electronic government” and “electronic executive”. This is related to direct translation from English “electronic government” or “e-government”. It is important to note, that in English, “government” doesn’t only mean “the highest executive ruling authority”, but government in general. That is why it is important to understand, that the current research will consider “electronic government” as a combination of state entities, that execute state management.

At the same time, it is important to highlight, that the term “electronic government” contains not only the informational and communicative ways – channels of communication, platforms, electronic mechanisms of document transfer, as well as totally new system of government and public interaction. Electronic government – is not just interaction between government management entities, but also the set-up of direct connection between the citizens and organizations with the use of IT network. It substitutes for the need to visit government organizations with the aim to obtain any type of documents. In fact, it is the process of provision of state services in the electronic form. Given this, it is important to understand, that in this sphere of public relations, IT technology is able to reshape the relationship between the state administration and citizens, businesses and other branches of government.

It is important to point out, that the integration of “electronic government” will not result in substitution of state officials with some sort of electronic machines. The work of government officials should be based on effective electronic information-communicative system. All the means presented should improve the effectiveness of their activity, and the expected result assumes the process of establishing solid direct and reverse connections between the society and the subjects of government management.

The whole idea of network electronic government originated abroad. Many governments understand the importance of development of new forms of electronic government management. At the moment, it is important to understand, that there is a notable development of new forms of management interaction. Network electronic government management is related to the inclusion of wider circle of the community into the government actions. Notably, the system of government management is making the steps into the future, where the relations between the state and the society will be set out in the way that allows to account for interests of the maximum number of citizens. Direct and reverse connections allow to account for private and group interests, develop and implement targeted system of management on the basis of new institutes of communication (Akopova and Przhedetskaya, 2016).

Therefore, the actuality of the topic of current research is supported by the important significance of innovations as a condition for effective government electoral process management in the Russian Federation. Current work emerges from the hypothesis about the need to integrate the electronic democracy as a technological platform of government management over the electoral process in the Russian Federation.

The article pursues the aim to investigate the mechanisms of integration of electronic democracy as a technological platform of government management over the electoral process in the Russian Federation. In order to achieve such aim, the study solves a number of problems in order to: characterise the innovation path of electronic democracy development; consider the ways to improve the effectiveness of technological platform of state management over the electoral process in the Russian Federation; formulate the proposals for improvements of government management impact.

Public relations formed as a result of implementation of government management will be used as an object of this study. The subjects of the study are various sources of empirical data that reflect the activity of government entities, while carrying out state management over the electoral process within the conditions of electronic democracy development.

## **2. Literature review**

The modern understanding of network electronic government management assumes that the citizens should have an adequate access to the information, on the basis of which, the government operates in the most effective way. They should have the means – in our case electronic, to obtain information and to formulate a consolidated opinion on the aspects of how well government functions are carried out. Undoubtedly, this requires a high level of transparency of government administration. With the development of internet network and greater information availability, citizens obtain greater understanding of maximum involvement in public relations. Public groups and movements make attempts to make the subject of government management more accountable, responsible and transparent.

At the same time, it is important to consider, that the countries of the modern world are at different stages of development. This makes an imprint on the development of electronic government globally. Russian Federation applies forms of electronic government management, with the account for domestic national traditions and priorities. In the process of implementation of the systems of electronic democracy there are various difficulties, and unequal regional development is one of them.

Modern approach regarding the electronic government management supposes the increase in social activity of citizens. Firstly, it is the openness of the subjects of

government management – creation of special internet websites. Secondly, it is the publication of information in the internet network, with the aim to allow the citizens to familiarize themselves with the activity of government management subjects. Thirdly, it is the opportunity for public discussion and expertise of laws, on the specially designed internet platforms. Fourthly, the use of existing social networks allows to set new targets for improvement of network electronic government management, which were unavailable previously, due to technological limitations in information-communication sphere. Fifthly, the development of mobile internet allows to carry out surveys or voting on the most significant issues for the citizens online.

Therefore, electronic government management is based on the constitutionally independent set-up of government entities and is implemented via the creation of informational interaction between the subjects of government management and the civil society. The advantage of such system of management is the inclusion of a significant number of citizens into the process of information collection and analysis, as well as issues of discussion and solution. Citizens provide different points of view, interests and have a varying degree of planning. It is important to point out, that it is not a new form of government entities but rather a system of mechanisms and principals, providing effective interaction between the state and the citizens.

Overall approach of modern government management is comprised of the fact that subjects of government management have lost their previous hierarchy. Management is based on horizontal connections between government entities, public communities and citizens. Modern paradigms of network electronic government management are different from previous administration and market schemes of government management. Given this, the main trend is aimed at the development of application of mobile electronic devices, that are able to identify a person, and hence, allow to use a smartphone or tablet in any part of the world. This means, that as citizens become more mobile, the government administrative environment should adapt in response. With the help of personal identification systems, mobile devices will provide an opportunity for instant access to all the open data bases, which will significantly speed up the process of government functions' implementation.

It is necessary to highlight, that internet has become an information-communication platform, where even politics is obtaining its digital form. High level of opportunity to express opinions, availability of multiple communities, hardships in finding compromise between various social groups – all of these aspects have resulted in the transformation of traditional management approaches.

It is possible to suggest that the humanity is now experiencing radical changes, and it is related to the use of information environment. Modern costs of using

information-communication technology become minute level, which allows average citizens to access them. Simultaneously, we can witness the abolition of technological centralization, which provides for greater information access from a larger group of users. There is an opportunity to attract a huge number of internet users to work on complex project of societal significance, from any location. Observations show great increase in effectiveness of interactions between the society and government. Undoubtedly, this results in changes of political life within the country.

This is explained by great development of social networks. These have transformed from being the means of public communication into the means of public collective self-organisation. Notable examples of political self-organisation are the meeting on the Bolotnaya and Sakharovskaya squares in Moscow in 2011 and 2012, and later on in other larger cities of the Russian Federation. Therefore, internet access to political processes makes modern citizens the participants of such events. This results in a paradox, when the established, hierarchical system of government entities is no longer needed to express public needs. With the help of internet, they can self-organize and even express their views separately from the hierarchy, passing the information to the executive power of the country. As a result of literature review of the topic we can conclude, that the level of research regarding the problem is fairly low. At the same time, the actuality of the topic is of high importance as we need to integrate various elements of electronic democracy into the process of government management.

### **3. Research methodology**

The basis of this research is formed by the common scientific, formal and logical methods (analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction and etc.), as well as special scientific methods such as systematic, comparative and legal. Formal and logical methods is used due to the need to perform legislation analysis, that regulates the electoral rights of citizens. Systematic and structural approach is used when considering the systems of common norms of legislation and relations with private norms of right, that regulates innovation activity and demands regarding the development of elements of electronic democracy. Legal-comparative method is implemented for comparative analysis of Russian legislative norms in the sphere of consideration.

### **4. Results**

This important aspect allows us to say that the new great epoch of electronic democracy is approaching. This epoch has become possible as a result of development of new forms of informational and communicational technology. As time goes these do not only change the form of democratic procedures, but the

process of their integration changes the essence of development of social processes. It is important to understand, that the development of electronic democracy is defined by: firstly, the spreading of politically important information; secondly, allowing a wider group of citizens the means of effective communication; thirdly, political balance via the help of balancing the interests of citizens and the state; fourthly, the opportunity of electronic voting with quick results calculation.

With the aim to understand the development of current socio-political processes it is necessary to refer to the Recommendation of the Ministry Committee of the European Council CM/Rec (2009) member states of the European Council on electronic democracy. It is supposed that with the integration of electronic democracy interested parties need to consider the stated principles of electronic democracy. It is important to note, that one of the principles of electronic democracy is closely related to government management in this sphere of public relations, which should appear effective, collective, transparent and accountable.

Electronic democracy allows to overcome the main hardships in our country – these include varying time zones and remoteness of regions. It should provide people the opportunity to obtain information and communicate in real time, allowing millions of people and organizations, located in convenient proximity, to establish close contact, aimed at discussion of problems and hence contributing towards new democratic processes. Subjects of government management should use electronic democracy in order to develop dialogue and improvement of communication, oriented at an average citizen, thereby guaranteeing citizens the opportunity to take an active and responsible civil stance.

The stated recommendations outline the aims of electronic democracy, which are similar to the aims of effective government management – transparency, accountability, responsibility, inclusiveness, accessibility, participation, subsidiarity, trust towards democracy and democratic institutions and processes. The term “electronic democracy” includes electronic legislation; electronic jurisdiction; electronic mediation; electronic initiative; electronic elections; electronic referendum; electronic voting; electronic consultation; electronic agitation; electronic results count and electronic surveys.

## **5. Discussion**

Results of the study prove the importance of application and integration of innovative technology of electronic democracy into the process of government management. One of the directions of innovation development is the application of elements of electronic democracy as a platform for selective government management. Therefore, information communication means should improve the image of democracy through qualitative and quantitative effectiveness improvement

of democratic institutes. Electronic democracy should become a technological platform for state electoral process management in the Russian Federation and can lead to the creation of new forms of democracy, which have the potential to equip the citizens with access, regardless of their location.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is important to point out that modern technology allows to establish electronic democracy globally within the next decades. Information communication technologies allows the citizens to feel involved in the events of state-importance during the voting procedures. The integration of direct democracy principles into the political life of the Russian Federation now seems inevitable.

We should agree with the opinion of Boris Slavin pointing out that humanity has initially evolved in the conditions of collective self-organisation – from ancient communes and has gradually moved towards democratic values. The second rebirth of democracy has happened in the V-IV century B.C. in the cities of Ancient Greece, where decisions were made with the participation of all citizens. In Russia, a similar tendency was observed in Novgorod veche. Full participation from citizens was possible due to small population in these cities, where accounting for every opinion was relatively easy. Further formation of government and emergence of large-scale empires have made power much more hierarchical, where accounting for every opinion was technically impossible. Third rebirth of democracy is related to the post-industrial, informational society, which required a more responsive government. It seems that the world is facing serious public changes, which will either bring a total digital control, or will allow information and communication technology to become a platform for wider democratic movement, which is a rebirth of people's rule in itself.

Notably, network electronic democracy has become some sort of technological platform for government electoral process management in the Russian Federation. Modern technological means should allow to attract a greater number of citizens into the political process. It is possible to develop the types of electronic voting, which will inevitably increase the number of people participating in the elections. Electronic agitation will spread rapidly, which is another way to get the citizens involved. It is fair to say, that the problems of electronic democracy development should not remain unnoticed by the subjects of government management and political leadership of the country.

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